

Statewide Family Support Center NEWSLETTER

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*Serving Kentucky's
Families with
Children Who are
Deaf and Hard of
Hearing*

CONTENTS

Parent-to-Parent	2
Family Advocates	2
Instructional Media	
Resource Center	3
Captioned Media	3
Short Courses	3

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Click on "Family Education Newsletters"

Clip art is downloaded from Microsoft at <http://office.microsoft.com/clipart>

The SFSC is part of the Kentucky School for the Deaf's Outreach Services and the Statewide Educational Resource Center on Deafness, components of the Kentucky Department of Education.

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WELCOME!

This is the first issue of the NEWSLETTER for the Statewide Family Support Center (SFSC)!

The SFSC is an exciting new resource for each and every family in Kentucky with a child who has a hearing loss. This unique center offers services that will enable you to better meet the needs of your Deaf or Hard of Hearing child. We hope to do this by

- promoting family involvement in the child's education;
- providing opportunities for networking with other families who also have Deaf or Hard of Hearing children;
- providing resources, referrals, information, and workshops for families related to a wide variety of topics (i.e. communication, language, literacy, amplification, technology...).

We firmly believe families should have access to resources, support, and education which will enable them to make informed decisions.



SERVICES CLOSER TO HOME

The Kentucky Department of Education worked for several years to study the needs of students who are deaf and hard of hearing across the state. KDE wants to improve services to all of Kentucky's children with a hearing loss regardless of where they go to school. They have gotten feedback from families, teachers, the deaf and hard of hearing communities through a series of stakeholders meetings, parent meetings, and open forums. The KDE Implementation Plan is the result of all the hard work over these past few years. The entire report is available through the KSD Website (www.ksd.k12.ky.us).

The SFSC Newsletter will report on the different sections of the Implementation Plan each month. This month we are focusing on the concept of "services closer to home." The KDE has appointed a contact person for each Special Education Co-op. The enclosed map shows you the counties in each Special Ed. Co-op. Find your county and then look at the list to get the name of your Contact Person. Feel free to call or email these people. Let them know how your child is doing in school... what's working and what's not working... ask for ideas to help your child receive all needed services "closer to home."

The SFSC recognizes that you have hopes and dreams for your child's future. We want to support you in every way we possibly can.

TEACHERS and OTHER SERVICE PROVIDERS

Our mission also involves working to equip teachers and other service providers with up-to-date information on technology, family dynamics, the impact of hearing loss on a family and other resources.

WHERE TO FIND US...

The SFSC is in the process of setting up in Lee Hall on the campus of the Kentucky School for the Deaf in Danville.

You are encouraged and invited to visit their spacious new facilities. In addition to the staff office and training rooms, there is a Parent Resource Center room with an adjacent childcare area. You can have a cup of coffee, chat with the staff or other parents, read magazines, watch videotapes from the lending library or just relax for a while.

Parent-to-Parent...

Submitted by STEPHANIE DISNEY, Louisville

I have to admit I am one of the lucky few who was never really a victim of childhood teasing. Neither different enough to draw attention or beautiful enough to incite jealousy, I moved freely, and confidently through childhood and adolescence. As a young pediatric audiologist I was surprised to hear parents, in early stages of grieving and coping with hearing loss worry about their child being teased about hearing aids. Looking at a 4 month old in hearing aids, I would have never anticipated this worry surfacing so early. It wasn't until I was a parent myself that I understood that worrying and parenting go hand in hand.

When my daughter, who is deaf, began kindergarten we made the terrifying decision to mainstream her into a parochial school. When the first week of school passed quickly, happily, and without incident I started to relax, just a little. Then at the end of week two, the expected happened when my daughter stepped into the minivan and with tears in



her eyes and said, "TJ teased me." The anger was like a physical blow. I could hardly catch my breath. Somehow I arranged my face into a calm façade and asked my daughter to tell me what the little boy had said. My daughter immediately wailed, "He said my freckles are ugly."

Whoosh, I could feel my anger receding. While teasing about freckles is very serious when you are in Kindergarten, it didn't seem nearly as devastating as being teased about a cochlear implant. Why? When I thought my daughter had been teased about Deafness, I was ready to storm the school, when I learned the teasing was about freckles, I gave my daughter some really good advice, "just tell him your freckles are angel kisses, then ignore him". By downplaying the importance of TJ and his opinion, I gave my daughter the confidence to stand up for herself.

My daughter is now almost half way through her 1st grade year, and so far we have not been teased about Deafness. I am not so naive as to think it will never happen; I just have a better idea

about how to handle it now. I will simply tell my daughter to let the bully know that her words and cochlear implant are beautiful, and then ignore him. After all, my daughter has an advantage when dealing with children who tease, if necessary she can just turn off the bully's words with a click of her processor – how nice.

Families are invited to share their personal stories about raising a child with hearing loss. Please send your article to the SFSC at PO Box 27, Danville, KY 40423 or email them to pbruce@ksd.k12.ky.us

Family Advocates for Kentucky's Children who are Deaf and Hard of Hearing

There is a NEW group of parents and professionals working together to give the family perspective on the needs of children who are deaf or hard of hearing. This will be a networking and advocacy group working for, and with, YOU.

On December 4th, several family members from across Kentucky met for a Leadership Training. This meeting was sponsored by the KSD PTCA (parent group) and the American Society for Deaf Children (ASDC). Benna Timperlake, a parent and ASDC Board member, from Corpus Cristi, Texas facilitated the meeting. By the end of the day, that group had decided to form a family advocacy and support group. They chose the name "Family Advocates for Kentucky's Children who are Deaf and Hard of Hearing." This group is open to any family in the state with a child who has a hearing loss. They also welcome teachers and other professionals who wish to support the needs of families and children. They are still very unstructured and open to ideas on how to organize this new group... goals, projects, etc. You are invited to the next meeting:

Saturday, January. 22, at 10:00ET at the new SFSC in Danville. Childcare is available at a small fee. Contact Cindy Freer in Somerset for more information: call her at 606-274-1511 or email her at TCLMBfreer@aol.com.



JUST FOR FUN... *What ingredients are mothers made of?... God makes mothers out of clouds and angel hair and everything nice in the world, and one dab of mean.* from an email "All About Moms"

Statewide Instructional Media Resource Center for the Deaf/Hard of Hearing

One component of Outreach Services is the new Statewide Instructional Media Resource Center for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing. This program is located in Lee Hall at the Kentucky School for the Deaf. Linda Cannon is the Media Resource Teacher. This resource center provides materials to families, teachers and other school personnel, and students. You are invited to contact Linda by phone or email to make requests.



The Resource Center will also include the Captioned Media Program (CMP). CMP is a free-loan and open-captioned video service provided by the U.S.

Department of Education and administered by the national Association of the Deaf. There are over 4,000 open-captioned titles for loan to registered clients. The CMP has two collections: **educational** (geography, literature, science, math, and other areas of study for students in grades K-13+) and **general interest** (movies, self-help, how-to-do, and classics). To qualify for the program, individuals with a hearing loss or professionals working with deaf or hard of hearing individuals may register by contacting the CMP.

To contact Linda Cannon, call her at 859-239-7017, ext 2220 or 2222. You can email her at lcannon@ksd.k12.ky.us

Short Course Offerings

Another component of the KDE's Implementation Plan is to offer Short Courses to students from around the state. Short Courses may range from 2-12 weeks with students coming to KSD for a specific purpose and returning to their home school district when that purpose is accomplished. Short course placement decisions will be based on individual student needs. Possible topics may include: specific communication skills, independent and/or daily living skills, specific technology needs, etc. Short Courses will allow students to receive instruction in specific areas and have opportunities for interacting with same-age peers who also have a hearing loss. While on campus, students will continue classes in their regular course of studies.

Ruth Sigler is the Coordinator of the Short Courses. She has recently sent out a survey to find

out the short course topics that families feel are most needed. If you have not received that survey or if you simply want more information, you may contact Ruth by calling 859-239-7017, ext 2158 or email her at rsigler@ksd.k12.ky.us

Technical Assistance for School Districts

The KDE is offering technical assistance to schools across the state that serve children with hearing loss. Through the KSD Outreach Services and through a contract with the Heuser Hearing Institute in Louisville, the state is able to provide schools with more information to meet the specific needs of these students.

If the family or school has a question about either Cochlear Implants or about Signing Exact English, KDE will ask the staff from Heuser Hearing Institute to respond. Other questions will be directed to the KSD Outreach Services staff or another agency after they determine who is best able to provide the needed information/training.

WHAT'S HAPPENING...

...at KSD

This newsletter replaces the KSD Family Education Newsletter. Each month (except this one) will include a special insert that has information about on-campus events and activities. For the list of January basketball games, see the KSD website (www.ksd.k12.ky.us) or contact any KSD staff person.

January 31st - Community Sign Classes will begin. This is a 9-week class. Families HAVE TO register for childcare. If you are a family member, there is no registration fee for either the class or childcare. More info in January.

... around the State

MARK YOUR CALENDARS...

January 25 - Silent Dinner in Murray at 6:00pm. RSVP to Paula Humphreys at Humphreys@ksd.k12.ky.us or (270) 443-3055

February 25-27 - Parent/Professional Conf. in Louisville at the Clarion Hotel. Contact Cathy Howle or Pat Bruce for more information or call 502-485-3562. Parent Scholarships are available.

April 9 - Deaf/Hard of Hearing Health Fair in Cincinnati will feature Heather Whitestone-McCallum. She was the first Miss America (1995) with a disability.



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